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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 000536

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS
FOR A/S SILVERBERG FROM AMBASSADOR OLIVER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2016

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [SOCI](#) [UNESCO](#)

SUBJECT: UNESCO: ADG CULTURE

RE: PARIS 341

1. (U) Classified by Andrew Koss, Deputy Chief of Mission, reason 1.4. (D)

2. (U) This is a request for guidance, see para 7.

3. (C) I am very concerned that all indications are that Francoise Riviere, a French national who currently heads the Director General's cabinet, has the inside track to be named the next Assistant Director General for Culture. I have raised our strong opposition to this appointment twice (reftel) with the Director General and each time he has indicated that he has taken my message on board but has not told me directly that he will not choose Mrs. Riviere.

4. (C) My concern has been heightened in recent days. First of all, though the Director General told me that he had asked the present ADG for Culture, Mounir Bouchenaki, to stay on, when I met with Bouchenaki last week, he told me that he had never received such a request from the DG. It's now too late; Bouchenaki has taken another job and will leave March 1. This anomaly is disturbing. Yesterday, my DCM was told by a senior official from the Cultural Sector who has also applied for the ADG job that she has given up because all indications are that the job will go to Riviere. That official expressed disgust with Riviere's behind-the-scenes meddling in pushing the cultural diversity convention forward.

5. (C) Today I attended a lunch where the ambassadors I spoke to all agreed that the job is Riviere's. My Hungarian counterpart told me that Riviere wants the job so that she can have control of the sector's money. It can be expected that she would ask for the same flexibility to spend the sector's money as that given to Peter Smith to reshape the Education Sector. This would probably mean that she would direct resources toward supporting the French government's push to get the cultural diversity convention ratified. Her appointment would also appease the French ambassador who has been complaining to the DG that French representation has been going down (note: France is still hugely overrepresented among UNESCO staff.)

6. (C) At today's lunch, the Iraqi ambassador also told me that he spoke to the DG about having the job encumbered by another Arab. The DG told him that the only thing that mattered was professional qualifications - Riviere has none in this field.

7. (C) Given the constant strong pressure by France and Canada to push for ratification of the CD convention, the prospect of a French national having the authority to commit additional funds to this effort would be of grave concern.

8. (SBU) Guidance request: please advise next steps. I have now met with the DG twice; should there be higher level pressure from Washington? We expect that a discussion on this will be announced sometime in the near future.

OLIVER